

## Claims

[c1] With a subscriber having a first phone number, a method for notifying the subscriber comprising the steps of: determining that at least one second phone number is available; and, communicating to the subscriber, the availability of said at least one available second phone number.

[c2] A method, as set forth in claim [c1], wherein said step of communicating to the subscriber includes the step of determining whether the subscriber is interested in subscribing to any of said at least one available second phone number.

[c3] A method, as set forth in claim [c1], wherein said step of communicating to the subscriber includes the step of automatically communicating to the subscriber in response to determining that said at least one second phone number is available.

[c4] A method, as set forth in claim [c1], wherein said step of communicating to the subscriber includes the step of notifying the subscriber from one of a placing a phone call, sending a mailpiece, sending a network communication, and receiving a communication from the subscriber wherein said received communication is any communication other than that of a subscriber initiated request for subscribing to an available phone number.

[c5] A method, as set forth in claim [c4], wherein said received communication from the subscriber is received from one of a phone call, mailpiece, and network communication.

[c6] A method, as set forth in claim [c5], wherein said mailpiece is one of a portable storage media, letter, postcard, and utility bill, said phone call is one of a voice, data, and fax, and said network communication is one of a URI, e-mail, bill, and web page data.

[c7] A method, as set forth in claim [c1], further including the step of generating said at least one second phone number from the first phone number.

- [c8] A method, as set forth in claim [c7], further including the step of generating at least one more subscriber phone number for each said generated second phone number.
- [c9] A method, as set forth in claim [c7], wherein the first phone number and each said second phone number includes a plurality of digits and each said second phone number differs by at least one digit from the first phone number.
- [c10] A method, as set forth in claim [c7], wherein the first phone number and said second phone number are one of a contiguous, same area code, same central exchange, and same block of 10, 100, 1,000 or 10,000 numbers.
- [c11] A method, as set forth in claim [c1], wherein said step of communicating to the subscriber includes the step of processing a phone call in a communication network to said first phone number.
- [c12] A method, as set forth in claim [c11], wherein said step of processing said phone call includes the steps of receiving dialed digits from a calling party corresponding to said first phone number, placing a phone call connection from said calling party through the network to a called party of said first phone number, and communicating with said called party to determine whether said called party is interested in subscribing to said at least one available second phone number.
- [c13] A method, as set forth in claim [c12], wherein said phone call connection between said calling party and said called party is placed through a one of a land line public switched telephone network, cellular network, AIN network, ATM, and IP telephony.
- [c14] A method, as set forth in claim [c12], wherein said calling party is one of a service provider, telephone operator, and directory assistance provider.
- [c15] A method, as set forth in claim [c12], wherein said step of communicating with said called party includes the step of presenting a menu including

options for one of a contacting said calling party and subscribing to said at least one available second phone number.

[c16] A method, as set forth in claim [c15], further including the step of receiving dialed digits entered by said calling party on a telephone keypad, said digits identifying a selected one of said options listed in said menu.

[c17] A method, as set forth in claim [c15], further including the step of receiving speech captured from said calling party, said captured speech identifying a selected one of said options listed in said menu.

[c18] A method, as set forth in claim [c1], further including the step of receiving from the subscriber a filter list having said at least one second phone number before determining whether said at least one second phone number is available.

[c19] A method, as set forth in claim [c18], wherein said step of determining that said at least one second phone number is available includes the step of comparing said generated second phone number to said filter list.

[c20] A method, as set forth in claim [c1], further including the step of receiving a communication from the subscriber wherein said received communication is any communication other than that of a subscriber initiated request for subscribing to an available phone number.

[c21] With a subscriber having a first phone number, an apparatus for notifying the subscriber comprising: a processor; a memory in operative association with said processor; means for determining that at least one second phone number is available; and, means for communicating to the subscriber, the availability of said at least one available second phone number.

[c22] With a subscriber having a first phone number, a computer program product for notifying the subscriber comprising the steps of: means for accessing a communication network; means for determining that at least one second phone number is available; and, means for communicating to the subscriber,

the availability of said at least one available second phone number.

[c23] In a communication network, a method for processing a phone call comprising the steps of: receiving dialed digits from a calling party corresponding to a phone number; attempting to place a phone call connection from said calling party through the network to said phone number; determining that said phone number is one of a changed phone number and disconnected phone number; and, communicating with said calling party to determine whether said calling party may be interested in subscribing to one of a said phone number and any available phone number.

[c24] A method for notifying a subscriber comprising the steps of: generating a first list having at least one available phone number; generating a second list having at least one subscriber, each subscriber having at least one subscriber phone number wherein each said subscriber phone number corresponds to said at least one available phone number; and, communicating with said at least one subscriber from said second list to notify the subscriber of said at least one available phone number corresponding to said at least one subscriber phone number from said first list.

[c25] A method, as set forth in claim [c24], wherein said first list is a product list and said second list is a contact list.